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## ASIA

**Two Interesting Maps of Syria.** One of the most interesting "documents" at the peace conference at Paris was in the form of a woven rug presented by the women of the Moslem Trade School at Beirut. It was made in the form of a map, and showed the area claimed by Syrian nationalists for a united Syria. This recalls to mind a wonderful mosaic on the floor of a church at Madeba, Moab, on the plateau east of the Dead Sea. At our request Dr. Ellsworth Huntington has given us the following note on the subject (cf. also Palmer and Guthe: *Die Mosaikkarte von Madeba*, 10 colored plates, Leipzig, 1906, and Dr. Huntington's "Palestine and Its Transformation," Boston, 1911, pp. 204-207).

It is the oldest existing map of the region. Even today, though much of the map has been picked to pieces, one can still see palm trees by the warm Dead Sea and fish swimming in the Jordan River. Formerly the map extended from Damascus in the other direction. Fortunately the central parts around Jerusalem are still intact. As in many ancient maps the top is at the east.

For the geographer it would be hard to find anything more fascinating than this crude, yet rather effective ancient map. Perhaps some day the Syrians, with their art of putting maps on the floor, will not merely make one for the floor of some great church, but for the floor of some great schoolroom. A map on the floor seems strange to us, but to the Syrian it is perfectly natural, since he takes off his shoes and goes around in stocking feet. He sits on one side, and the map is spread out before him. For the children who sat in the old church at Madeba it must have been an interesting sight when they had tired of the service to see the lions chasing the gorillas among the palm trees of Palestine on the floor before them.

**Wasteful Exploitation of Manchurian Forests.** No country has suffered more heavily than China as a result of reckless destruction of her forests, yet deforestation continues in the Manchurian provinces. Much of Manchuria, lying as it does in the great wheat belt of the world, is, of course, land properly devoted to agriculture. With the building of the Chinese Eastern Railway clearing and cultivation have gone on apace. Harbin, little more than twenty years ago a hamlet of fishermen, is now a town of 100,000 and a great wheat mart. The western section of the province of Kirin and the valleys of the large rivers are under cultivation, and settlers are pushing forward. Yet vast areas in Kirin province and also north of the Sungari are natural forest reserves, and it is against the wasteful exploitation of these areas that a protest has been recently put forward by Captain Arthur de C. Sowerby, who has made several journeys of exploration in these little-known sections of Manchuria (*The Exploration of Manchuria*, *Geogr. Journ.*, August, 1919).

The great Kirin forest covers the Chang Pei range and extends northwards, touching the banks of the Sungari east of Harbin and stretching well into the angle formed by the junction of the Ussuri and the Amur. The area of the forest is said to be equal to that of Scotland. The splendid forests of the Chang Pei Shan, chiefly deciduous, with the oak as the predominant tree, are being cut on the southern side by Japanese, who get the timber out by way of the Yalu, and on the northern side by Chinese, who make use of the Sungari and its tributaries. Still farther north Russian and Chinese companies extract timber consisting chiefly of pine. Enormous quantities of oak, walnut, and maple are cut for fuel for the populace and for locomotives and steamers on the Sungari. From his camp on the Sungari Captain Sowerby had opportunity of gaging the extensive output of timber from the slopes at the sources of the main stream and its tributaries. "Every hour of the day dozens of huge rafts of logs came floating past. Some of these contained twenty or thirty thousand feet of timber, averaging 3 to 4 feet in diameter, sometimes much more."

## GEOGRAPHICAL NEWS

## OBITUARY

FRANCISCO P. MORENO, the foremost Argentine geographer, died at Buenos Aires on November 22, at the age of 67. In the words of Bailey Willis' excellent biography of Moreno in the "Geographen-Kalender" (Perthes, Gotha) for 1911, to which the reader is referred for fuller information, "among the chief results of his career . . . there stand out conspicuously the exploration of Patagonia, the organization of the Museo de La Plata and of the researches conducted under its auspices, the conclusion of the Argentino-Chilean boundary arbitration according to a satisfactory division of the territory in dispute, and the institution of topographical surveys of the Province of Buenos Aires." In 1909 Señor Moreno was awarded the Cullum Geographical Medal of the American Geographical Society.